

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 052942

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC INFO BANGKOK, LONDON  
FROM HONG KONG MARCH 14:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 2862

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR HK

SUBJECT: HONG KONG WHITE PAPER ON DRUG ABUSE

REF: HONG KONG 10816 OF 1973

SUMMARY: LONG-AWAITED HONG KONG GOVERNMENT (HKG) WHITE PAPER  
ON DRUG ABUSE WAS RELEASED MARCH 13. REPORT LOOKS TOWARD  
TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION AS PRIMARY METHOD OF REDUCING  
HONG KONG'S ADDICT POPULATION AND, THROUGH THIS MEANS,  
REDUCING HONG KONG' ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING. ON  
ENFORCEMENT SIDE, REPORT CALLS FOR STIFFER SENTENCES FOR  
DRUG TRAFFICKERS, SUGGESTS FURTHER EXPANSION OF POLICE  
NARCOTICS BUREAU, AND PROMISES NEW LAW ON SOFT DRUGS. END  
SUMMARY.

1. HKG'S WHITE PAPER ON DRUG ABUSE, WHICH HAS BEEN ANTICIPATED  
FOR SOME MONTHS AND WHOSE PRIMARY POINTS WERE INCLUDED IN THE  
GOVERNOR'S STATE OF HONG KONG MESSAGE OCTOBER 17, 1973  
(REFTEL), WAS TABLED AT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 13.

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PAPER IS SHORT (14 PAGES), WITH SECTIONS ON PAST DECADE,

INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, TREATMENT, AND  
ADMINISTRATION.

2. PRIMARY EMPHASIS GIVEN TO TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF  
HONG KONG'S ADDICT POPULATION WHICH "MAY APPROACH 100,000."  
PRESENT TREATMENT FACILITIES ARE CONSIDERED GOOD BUT THROUGHPUT  
ONLY SOME 3,000 ANNUALLY WITH OVERALL RELAPSE RATE OF 70 PERCENT.  
ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS (ACAN) SLATED TO CONDUCT  
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF PRESENT PROGRAMS IN 1974 TO ADVISE HKG  
ON WHAT ADDITIONAL TREATMENT FACILITIES ARE REQUIRED. ACAN WILL  
BE ASSISTED BY NEW NARCOTICS AND DRUGS ADMINISTRATION DIVISION IN  
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT. NEW DIVISION WILL ALSO SUPERVISE ALL  
TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS APPROVED BY HKG. THUS,  
PRIVATE PROGRAMS (SUCH AS THOSE OPERATED BY SOCIETY FOR AID AND  
REHABILITATION OF DRUG ADDICTS AND DISCHARGED PRISONERS AID  
SOCIETY) OPERATING WITH GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY AS WELL AS HKG PROGRAMS,  
NOW RUN BY PRISONS DEPARTMENT, WILL HAVE NEW MANAGEMENT AND/OR  
SUPERVISION. IN CONNECTION WITH REVIEW, ACAN CHAIRMAN SIR  
ALBERT RODRIGUES AND MEDICAL DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR DR. CHOA ARE  
SCHEDULED TO VISIT EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN TREATMENT CENTERS DURING  
APRIL-MAY 1974.

3. REPORT PROMISES TWO CHANGES IN CURRENT LAWS. FIRST WILL BE  
AMENDMENT TO DANGEROUS DRUGS ORDINANCE INCREASING PENALTIES FOR  
THOSE "ENGAGING IN DRUG TRAFFICKING FOR PROFIT." SECOND IS NEW  
ORDINANCE ON SOFT DRUGS (AMPHETAMINES AND BARBITURATES) WHICH ARE  
NOW COVERED ONLY BY ORDINANCE PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO CONTROL  
SALE OF POISONS. REPORT ALSO TAKES BACKHAND SLAP AT LOCAL COURTS  
IN STRESSING IMPORTANT COURT ROLE IN PROVIDING "DETERRENT  
SENTENCES" FOR NARCOTICS VIOLATORS. MOST HK POLICE OFFICIALS AS  
WELL AS NARCOTICS COMMISSIONER HAVE BEEN CONCERNED BY WHAT THEY  
CONSIDER UNDUE LENIENCY ON PART OF LOCAL JUDGES.

4. ADMINISTRATIVELY, REPORT CONFIRMS GOVERNOR'S EARLIER  
STATEMENTS (REFTEL) ON ROLE OF ACAN AS SOLE CHANNEL OF ADVICE TO  
HKG ON NARCOTICS MATTERS. ADDITIONALLY, COMMISSIONER OF NARCOTICS  
(WHO AUTHORED THE WHITE PAPER) IS TAKING OVER SMALL NARCOTICS  
DIVISION PREVIOUSLY IN HOME AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT AND THIS WILL  
SERVE AS ACAN'S SECRETARIAT. COMMISSIONER WILL THEREBY BOTH SERVE  
AS AN ACAN MEMBER AND BE IN DIRECT CHARGE OF ACAN'S SECRETARIAT.  
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5. STATISTICALLY, REPORT SUGGESTS APPROXIMATELY 35 TONS OF RAW  
OPIUM AND SEVEN TO TEN TONS OF MORPHINE BASE ENTER HONG KONG FROM  
GOLDEN TRIANGLE EACH YEAR. REPORT ALSO STATES "PROBABLY NOT LESS  
THAN 20 HEROIN LABS WORK INTERMITTENTLY" IN HONG KONG. IN 1973,  
REPORT INDICATES 5,121 POUNDS OF OPIUM, 853 OF MORPHINE, 151 OF  
HEROIN, AND 38 OF CANNABIS WERE SEIZED WITH THREE HEROIN  
LABS RAIDED AND 19,939 PERSONS ARRESTED ON DRUG CHARGES.

6. IN DISCUSSING HONG KONG'S INTERNATIONAL ROLE, REPORT ADMITS THAT "SMALL QUANTITIES OF HEROIN" OF HONG KONG ORIGIN HAVE BEEN FOUND IN UK, WESTERN EUROPE, AND NORTH AMERICA AND THAT HONG KONG COULD "IN FUTURE BECOME MORE IMPLICATED IN HEROIN EXPORTS," WITH "SOME OVERSEAS CRITICS" CONSIDERING THAT HONG KONG ALREADY IS HEAVILY INVOLVED. AFTER LONG STATEMENT ON UN COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS, REPORT PLEDGES HKG INTENT TO COOPERATE FULLY ON INTERNATIONAL LEVEL TO SUPPRESS ILLICIT DRUG TRADE.

7. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IS CURRENTLY DEBATING PROPOSED BUDGET AND NO DISCUSSION WAS HELD ON WHITE PAPER AFTER IT WAS TABLED. NARCOTICS COMMISSIONER BELIEVES PAPER WILL BE DEBATED IN MID TO LATE APRIL. ALTHOUGH INFORMATION ON CONTENTS OF REPORT CARRIED PROMINENTLY IN MORNING PRESS, ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENT THUS FAR HAS BEEN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST WHICH CONSIDERED WHITE PAPER A DISAPPOINTMENT AND REGRETTE THAT PAPER DID NOT PROVIDE THE ANSWERS AS TO "HOW AND WHEN AND AT WHAT COST" HKG WILL STOP ILLICIT TRAFFICKING AND ERADICATE DRUG ABUSE FROM COMMUNITY.

8. COMMENT. WE AGREE THAT REPORT MUST BE CONSIDERED AS SOMEWHAT OF DISAPPOINTMENT, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT HAS BEEN BALLYHOOED FOR SOME MONTHS AS A COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT OF HONG KONG'S NARCOTICS SITUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMBATting BOTH LOCAL DRUG ABUSE AND HONG KONG ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING. BASICALLY, WHITE PAPER LACKS SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS EXCEPT FOR MINOR LAW CHANGES WHICH ARE HARDLY INNOVATIVE. EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION BUT ONLY REAL SUBSTANTIAL DETERMINATION IN THIS AREA IS THE "COMPREHENSIVE REVIEWS" BY ACAN IN 1974. HONG KONG'S TWO PILOT METHADONE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS ARE TREATED CURSORILY WITH "PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS ARE THAT THESE MAY POINT THE WAY TO A CURE." THUS, DIRECTION AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, CONFIDENTIAL

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PACE OF TREATMENT PROGRAMS REMAIN UNDERDETERMINED PRESUMABLY PENDING ACAN'S REVIEW AND ANOTHER REPORT ON ITS FINDINGS.

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## Message Attributes

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